

# Rare Mammal Observations 2002

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## **Abstract**

Reports were received on 5 observations of 6 American marten, 2 observations of wolverine, 5 observations of 7 lynx, 49 observations of 52 cougar, and 21 observations of moose. Reports of 2 calves, and confirmation of a calf born to a radio collared moose, indicates breeding is probably occurring in Wisconsin. Three radio collared moose were monitored in Wisconsin.

## **Methods**

Observations were collected of rare mammals including timber wolf (*Canis lupus*), American marten (*Martes americana*), Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*), cougar (*Puma concolor*), wolverine (*Gulo gulo*), and moose (*Alces alces*). These observations were collected from agency field personnel or members of the general public in 2002. Observations of rare mammals were reported on a "Rare Mammal Observation Card" (Figure 1) and were sent to the DNR office in Park Falls. All observations were classified as "probable", "possible", or "not likely". Only "probable" and "possible" observations are reported here. Moose were usually listed as probable because it was relatively easy to accurately identify. Animals were classified as adults if they appeared to be  $\geq 1$  year old, but among carnivores could include younger animals because adult size was achieved by 6 to 9 months. Animals less than 1 year old were called juveniles, and this included moose calves.

## **Results & Discussion**

Six marten were observed in 5 reports of observations (Table 1). Observations near Rhinelander in Oneida County, Star Lake in Vilas County and Solon Springs in Douglas County are somewhat outside the main marten range (Figure 1). Possibly some marten are establishing outside the main range.

Two reports were received of wolverine (Table 2). One observed in Columbia County may represent an animal escaping from captivity. Last year two reports were received of captive escaped wolverines in southern Wisconsin. Observations in northern Wisconsin are less clear, and could be misidentification.

Five reports were received of 7 lynx in Wisconsin (Table 3). Normally a small influx of lynx in Wisconsin occurs every 10 years, and in 1992-1993 several reports of lynx were received and 2 died in Wisconsin in 1992 (Wydeven 1993). In 2002, 2 reports were received of 2 lynx, although both of these reports may have been bobcat. Lynx or bobcat normally do not travel together, except males and females breeding, or mothers and offspring (McCord and Cardoza 1982).

The observations of 2 lynx together would suggest the possibility of breeding, but at this time it remains unclear whether these 2 observations actually represent lynx. Our experience has been that when solid evidence of photos of the animal or tracks are presented, people do often mistake bobcats for lynx.

Five reports of 6 cougar were reported that were classified as probable (Table 4). Three of the five probable observations were from Vernon County in southwest Wisconsin, and 2 were from northern Wisconsin. One observation was made of 2 cougars near Tomahawk. Two cougars

would be a breeding pair, mother and offspring, or a pair of siblings. Because cougars do occasionally escape from captivity, such observations are not necessarily evidence of breeding activity.

Forty-nine observations were made of 52 cougars across Wisconsin that were classified as possible or probable (Table 5). Cougar reports were concentrated in northern Wisconsin and southwest Wisconsin, but also a few in southeast Wisconsin. These represent reports of possible cougar observations, but many could be mistaken identifications. Highest observation rates were for Oneida (9), Iron (5) and Forest (5) counties.

Twenty one observations of moose were received in 2002 (Table 6). The observations were considerably down from 2001, when fifty-three observations were received of 61 moose. Number of counties for moose reports declined from 13 in 2001 to 8 in 2002. Highest report rates were for Ashland (8), Iron (7), and Vilas (3) counties. The most southern reported moose observation was for Chippewa County. Two calves or juvenile moose were reported from Marinette and Vilas County.

Three radio collared moose were monitored in 2002. Adult male 5104M was monitored in a year round home range area of west central Iron County and north of the Flambeau Flowage (Figure 3). He was initially detected in Wisconsin on 11 May 2001 and remained in his home range area until he died prior to 10 June 2002. Cause of death was not determined, but he may have been shot. For over a year he remained in his home range area in western Iron County, except one short visit to western Gogebic County Michigan in September 2001.

An adult bull (5131M) was detected south of Fifield, Price County, on 21 February 2002, but he may have been in central and western Price County since fall 2001. The moose remained near Fifield until April, when he gradually moved east and north through Price and Iron counties, into Gogebic County Michigan (Figure 3). He left Wisconsin after 31 May 2002 and remained in Michigan.

Moose cow 5155F has spent spring and summer in northern Forest and northeast Vilas counties during 2001 and 2002, but returned to winter in northern Iron and southern Baraga counties, Michigan. She was in Forest County from 11 May to 1 October 2001, with a short return trip on 24 October 2001. Moose 5155F was in her summer home range in Forest County from 29 April through 29 October 2002. When she returned to Michigan, moose 5155F was seen with a calf on 9 December 2002, apparently born in Wisconsin in May or early June 2002. This is the first documentation of a calf birth in Wisconsin in modern times, and probably the first in over 100 years. We will attempt to determine if 5155F passes on her migration patterns to her offspring.

Literature Cited:

McCord, C.M. and J.E. Cardoza 1983. Bobcat and Lynx. pp 728-766 in J.A. Chapman and G.A. Feldhamer. Wild Mammals of North America: Biology, Managements and Economics. John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland. 1147 pp.

Rusz, P.J. 2001. The cougar in Michigan: Sightings and Related Information, Bengel Wildlife Center. 64 pp. (<http://www.mwhf.org/pdf/files/cougar.pdf>).

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**Figure 1.** *Rare mammal observation card.*

<b>Rare Mammal Observation Card</b> (Use for Timber Wolf, Cougar, Lynx, Moose & Marten)	
<b><u>Observer:</u></b>	<b><u>Description of Animal:</u></b>
Name _____	Estimated Size _____
Address _____	Tail Length (stub, ¼ body, ½ body, long as body): _____
Phone(    ) _____	Track Size: Length _____ Width _____
Observers Background: _____	Coloration _____
No. & Species _____	Other Descriptions _____
Sex _____ Adult _____ Young _____	Photo Taken _____
<b><u>Location:</u></b>	General Comments _____
Sec _____ Twn _____ Range _____	_____
County _____	_____
Road & Nearest Town: _____	_____
Habitat _____	Reviewed by _____
Date & Time _____	Agency _____ Phone(    ) _____
	Code: PB    PS    NL

**Table 1.** *Reported possible and probable observations of American marten in Wisconsin in 2002.*

Date	Number seen	Number tracks	Sec	Township	Range	County	Nearest Town	Agency <sup>1</sup>
1/16	0	1A	13	41N	5W	Sawyer	Clam Lake	USFS
3/22	2?	0	28	36N	8E	Oneida	Rhinelanders	Private
5/4	1A	0	26	40N	11E	Vilas	Eagle River	Private
11/1	1A	0		45N?	14W?	Douglas	Solon Springs	Private
11/22	0	1A	20	42N	9E	Vilas	Star Lake	DNR

<sup>1</sup>Agency for whom observer works

**Table 2.** *Reported possible and probable observations of wolverine in Wisconsin in 2002.*

Date	Number seen	Number tracks	Sec	Township	Range	County	Nearest Town	Agency <sup>1</sup>
6/16	1A	0	10	42N	7E	Vilas	Boulder Junction	Private
7/20	1A1?	0	23	10N	7E	Columbia	Lodi	Private

<sup>1</sup>Agency for whom observer works





**Figure 2.** *Reported possible and probable marten and wolverine observations in Wisconsin during 2002.*

**Table 3. Reported possible and probable observations of lynx in Wisconsin in 2002.**

Date	Number seen	Number tracks	Sec	Township	Range	County	Nearest Town	Agency <sup>1</sup>
08/30	2A	0	5?	40N	15E	Florence	Tipler	Private
10/18	1?	0	5	44N	14W	Douglas	Moose Junction	Private
11/23	1A	0	36	42N	3E	Iron	Mercer	Private
11/25	2?	0	2	42N	2W	Ashland	Glidden	Private
12/05	1A	0	13	48N	13W	Douglas	Brule	Private

<sup>1</sup>Agency for whom observer works**Table 4. Reported probable visual observations of cougars in Wisconsin in 2002.**

Date	Number sighted	Sec	Township	Range	County	Nearest Town	Color	Agency <sup>1</sup>
6/14	1A	9	12N	5W	Vernon	Viroqua	Tan	Private
6/22	1A	14	12N	6W	Vernon	Viroqua	Tan	Private
7/17	1?	36	39N	4E	Oneida	Minocqua	Tan	Private
7/26	2A	24	34N	6E	Lincoln	Tomahawk	Brown	Private
11/3	1A	5	12N	4W	Vernon	Viroqua	Yellow	Private

<sup>1</sup>Agency for whom observer works

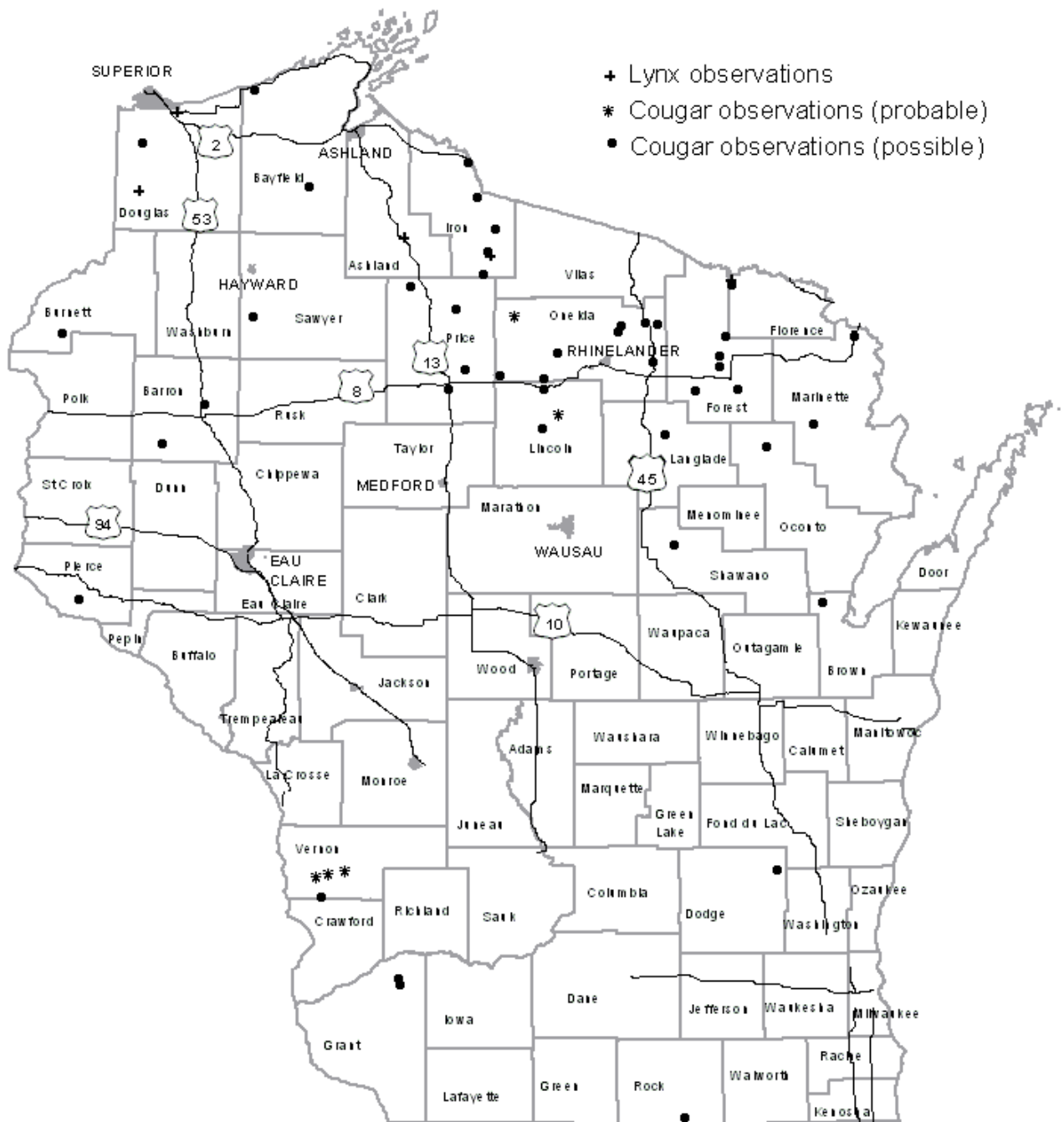
**Table 5.** *Reported probable and possible observations of cougars in Wisconsin in 2002, by quarter.*

County	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Total
Barron	1		1 (tracks)		2
Bayfield	1	1			2
Brown				1	1
Burnett			1		1
Dodge				1	1
Douglas				1	1
Florence			1		1
Forest			2 (1 of tracks)	3 (1 report of 2)	5
Grant	2 (1 of tracks & 1 report of 2)				2
Iron		2	2	1 (tracks)	5
Langlade				1	1
Lincoln			3 (1 report of 2)		3
Marinette		1		1	2
Oconto		1			1
Oneida		2	7		9
Pierce			1		1
Price	1	2	1		4
Rock				1	1
Sawyer	1 (tracks)				1
Shawano			1		1
Vernon		3		1	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6 (7 animals)</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>20 (21 animals)</b>	<b>11 (12 animals)</b>	<b>49</b>









**Figure 3.** Reported possible and probable lynx and cougar sightings in Wisconsin during 2002.

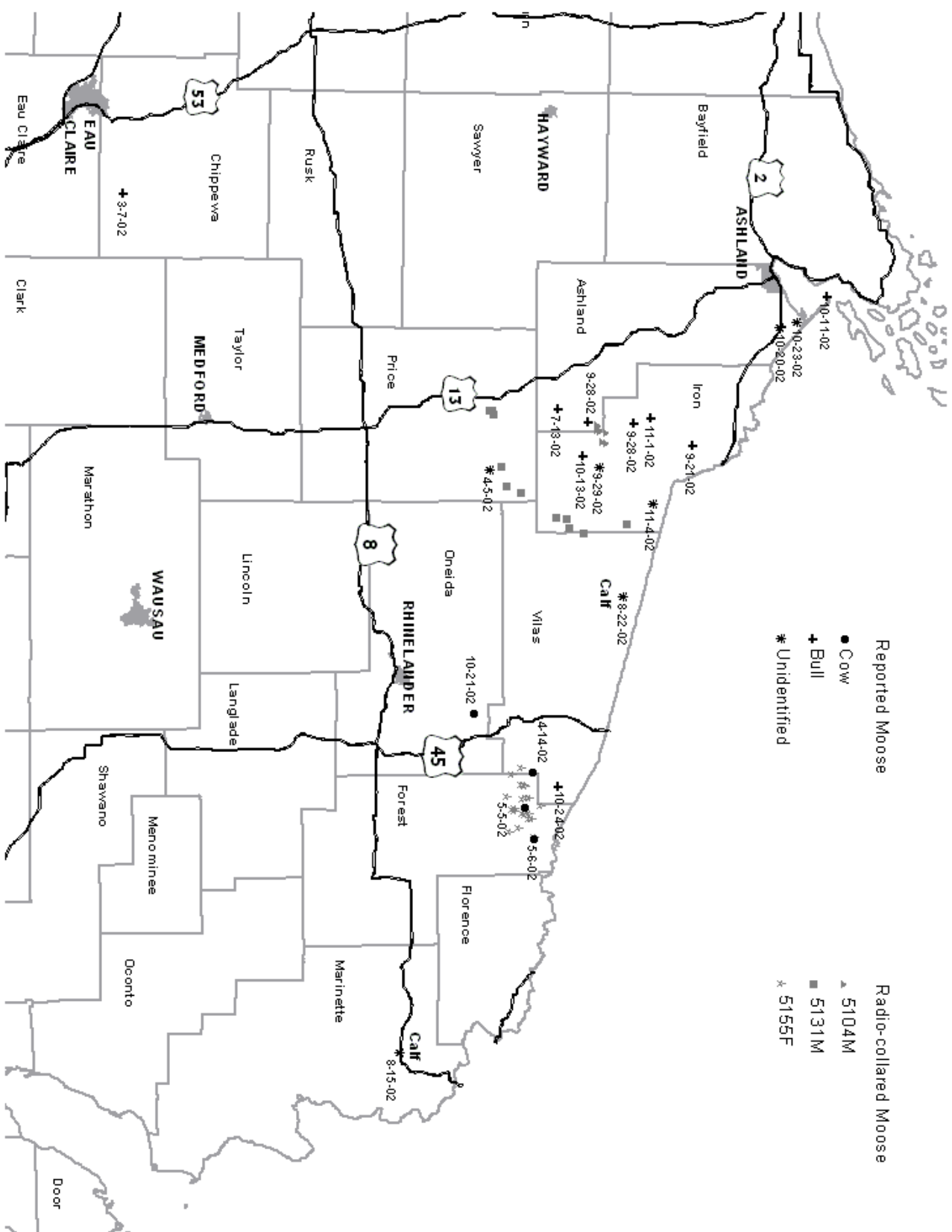
**Table 6. Reported possible and probable observations of moose in Wisconsin in 2002.**

Date	Number sighted	Tracks sighted	Sex	Town ship	Range	Sect.	County	Nearest Town
3/7	1A		M	28N	6W	7	Chippewa	Cadott
4/5		1U	U	39N	3E	18	Price	Park Falls
4/14	1A		F	40N	12E		Vilas	Eagle River
5/5	1A		F	40N	13E	18	Forest	Alvin
5/6	1A		F?	40N	13E	1	Forest	Alvin
7/13	1A		M	41N	1E	8	Ashland	Butternut
8/15	1J		U	36N	20E	5	Marinette	Pembine
8/22	1J		U	43N	6E	13	Vilas	Presque Isle
9/21	1A		M	45N	2E	9	Iron	Hurley
9/28		1A	M?	43N	1E	2	Iron	Upson
9/28	1A		M	42N	1E	14	Ashland	Butternut
9/29		1A	U	42N	3E	6	Iron	Mercer
10/11	1A		M	49N	4W	13	Ashland	LaPointe
10/13	1A		M	42N	2E	23	Iron	Mercer
10/20	1A		M	48N	3W	25	Ashland	Odanah
10/21	1A		F	39N	10E	32	Oneida	Clearwater Lake
10/23	1A?		U	48N	3W	11?	Ashland	Odanah
10/24	1A		M	41N	12E		Vilas	Phelps
10/28		1A?	U	48N	3W	25	Ashland	Odanah
11/1	1A		M	44N	1E	22	Iron	Upson
11/4		1U	U	44N	4E	19	Iron	Pine Lake
10 Adult M 4 Adult F 3 Adult U 2 Juvenile <u>2 Unknown</u> 21 Total								8 counties

<sup>†</sup>A=Adult; J=Juvenile; U=Unknown







**Figure 4. Reported possible and probable moose observations in Wisconsin during 2002.**